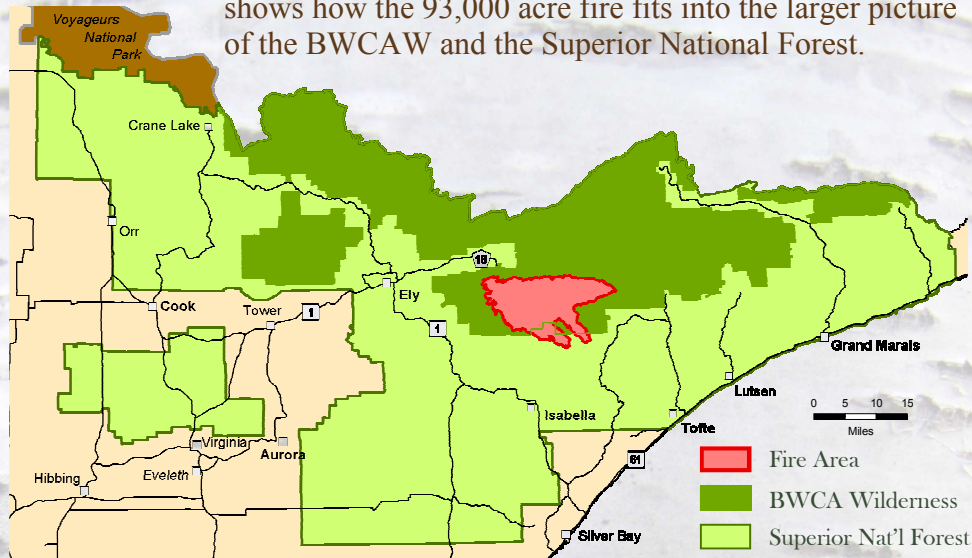




Where was the Pagami Creek Fire? The map below shows how the 93,000 acre fire fits into the larger picture of the BWCAW and the Superior National Forest.



Pagami Creek Wildfire in a Wild Land



Just as a Minnesota winter promises the rebirth of spring, so does the post-fire landscape promise the renewal of the northwoods forest. Additionally, just as winter has its own beauty, you can learn to appreciate the beauty of the post fire wilderness for itself, not just for the forest of the future. You are present at an amazing moment, the rebirth of a forest. Take time to really look and understand the forces of nature around you, and take full advantage of this rare chance to visit the post-fire wilderness.



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Exploring and Camping in the Pagami Creek Fire Area



What can you do to help the recovering forest?

Camp on open campsites. Protecting the recovering forest requires some temporary site closures. Commercially published maps may not show all the changes, so check the status of campsites at Superior National Forest offices or the website and plan for alternatives. Watch for and follow any additional posted instructions or closures.



Use portage, latrine trails, and tent pads which existed before the fire. The fire may have opened new possible routes and tent sites, but stay on soil that has already been compacted and is less susceptible to erosion. Post-fire soils and new plants are very fragile.

Dispose of waste properly by using latrines for human waste and packing out everything else. With a more open view and an increased need to stay on the trails, using a 'cat-hole' is not a good option in this area. Speaking of views, you will want to bring a poncho or tarp for increased privacy while using the latrine - some may be very exposed.

Use a cookstove in this area. While dead and charred wood is abundant, the recovering forest depends on this wood for nutrients and erosion control. If you need a campfire, gather wood from unburned areas.

Don't offer wildlife a free lunch. Trees for hanging food packs will be scarce in the fire area. Have an alternative method of protecting your supplies from bears and other animals. Don't stash your food in your tent; use a bear resistant food container.

Leave what you find. You may find natural artifacts like bones and antlers, as well as human artifacts from other eras which have been revealed by the fire. Leave them where they are. Bones and antlers are used by wildlife and artifact location and placement provide important clues to archeologists, so don't disturb them. If you find anything particularly interesting, take a picture and make note of the location and report it at a Forest Service office.

Be considerate of other visitors. Keep in mind while paddling or while at your campsite that the lack of trees will make it easier for you to be heard and seen by other visitors.



What can you expect while visiting the Pagami Fire Area?

A range of conditions.

A post-fire forest has a wide range of conditions. Fires don't burn uniformly, so an area with little regrowth yet may be next to a greening area, next to an unburned spot.



Post-fire hazards.

Beware of standing snags and trees. Fire can burn the roots and leave an unstable tree

standing. It can also burn out the interior of a tree and leave a fragile, but still heavy, hollow shell. Place your tent where nothing can fall on it, and don't trust tree strength when rigging tarps or other lines. **Watch your step as well.** Ash can be very slippery when wet. Newly exposed rocks and fallen debris can add tripping hazards to the trail. **Yes, you will get dirty!** Charred wood can blacken you just from brushing against it. Watch where you sit - but remember, you are camping. You're going to get dirty anyway!



A chance to investigate.



Look around you - what can you figure out? Which direction was the fire travelling? How fast? How hot was the fire? If you're in an unburned patch, why didn't it burn? Are there any animal signs? Are there plants coming up? What else can you discover?